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NEWS RELEASE



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December 1, 1997

**COATS COMMENTS ON FUTURE OF MILITARY
FOLLOWING TODAY'S RELEASE OF
NATIONAL DEFENSE PANEL REPORT**

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Sen. Dan Coats this morning attended the news conference where the National Defense Panel (NDP) released their report on the future needs of our military.

"Today's release of the NDP findings presents new challenges for Congress from top to bottom to inform its members on the future military needs we face," Coats said. "The same challenge exists for those at the Department of Defense. We must become more aware of nature, magnitude, and trend of these strategic challenges in order to transform our military capabilities to successfully deal with them.

"The NDP served two vital functions: as a hedge against the status quo and an independent validation of innovative recommendations proposed by the Quadrennial Defense Review. And it has considered alternatives unencumbered by Pentagon policies, Congressional constituencies, or budget constraints. They have provided an alternative view, not based on distrust or suspicion of the Pentagon, but on the recognition that we need bold and innovative thinking from a variety of sources in this time of rapid change.

"The NDP report is not a status quo document. Their conclusion is that the future force must be thought of in different terms than Army divisions, air wings, and naval carrier groups. The NDP took an approach driven by an articulation of future challenges from which they developed a template of critical force characteristics to meet them.

"We must experiment jointly to investigate the potential of a new, perhaps completely different force. This means that some systems currently in the field may be retired and some in development may be canceled. Others will be augmented or accelerated. And still others will need to be invented through the rapid pace of technological development.

"Our defense process needs to change. We need to transform our military capabilities to sustain the relative capability advantage we enjoy in the world today. And the NDP has given us the framework to transform our military capabilities for the 21st century. Now the task for the Clinton administration and the Congress is to establish and resource this transformation, and continue to push against today's status quo so that tomorrow's military will be ready to meet the security needs of the next century," Coats said.

Coats co-sponsored legislation which required the Pentagon to form this NDP and undertake a comprehensive assessment of every facet of our military in the light of technological advances and the broad range of potential threats in the 21st century.